

# School District Redistricting Commission

Minutes of Public Forum

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Phoenix College—Dome Conference Center, Phoenix

## Members Present

Martin Shultz  
Joe Thomas  
Vicki Anderson  
Dave Naugle  
Art Harding  
Tom Schoaf  
Jay Kaprosy

## Members Absent

Susan Bitter Smith  
Jay Blanchard  
Sandra Dowling  
Doris Goodale  
Rita Leyva  
Kent Scribner

### 1. Call to Order

Chairman Marty Shultz called the meeting to order at 6:32 on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 and attendance was noted by the secretary.

### 2. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Marty Shultz explained that the purpose of this official public hearing is to answer questions to the public as factually as possible. The Video Presentation and Auditor General's Report will answer many questions. This forum addresses only the Maricopa County plans. He reviewed the purpose of the Commission's purpose and task. Chairman Shultz stated that commissioners will not be able to answer speculative questions or questions which must be answered by the school boards after unification occurs. All commissioners will try to be as accurate as possible.

#### A. Welcome (Tom Schoaf)

Commissioner Tom Schoaf commented that the SDRC recommendations have raised emotional responses. The commission is just 13 people who came together because they were asked to do so by legislators. We did this because we thought it was important for kids. The whole commission is not behind all these proposals and we are all from various backgrounds.

#### B. Welcome (Art Harding)

Commissioner Art Harding thanked the public and commissioners attending this hearing. He also thanked Jackie Jones, Legislative Assistant at the Department of Education, for her work this year with the Commission.

#### C. Welcome (Dave Naugle)

Commissioner Dave Naugle introduced himself and stated that he had been in education for awhile. He is very interested to see how Maricopa County feels about the proposals.

#### D. Welcome (Vicki Anderson)

Commissioner Vicki Anderson stated that she came from San Diego City, a unified school district and stated that she realized we were here to consider information and input.

E. Welcome (Joe Thomas)

Commissioner Joe Thomas introduced himself as the active school teacher on the panel. He encouraged the public to ask lots of questions. He stated that he is looking forward to seeing the video since no one has seen it. He asked the public to be critical when voting on the proposals in November.

F. Welcome (Jay Kaprosy)

Commissioner Jay Kaprosy stated that he wants what's best for students.

G. Welcome to those absent (Marty Shultz)

Chairman Shultz welcomed those commissioners absent today and also thanked the Arizona School Board Association for their information about redistricting posted on their website.

### 3. Video Presentation for Maricopa County

#### 4. Public Comments and Questions

- A. Nancy Schriber, a parent in the Madison School District, asked the following questions:  
How can you say the recommendations reflect local input when the public opposed this and nobody wanted it?  
Why did the Phoenix Union High School plan pass?

Chairman Shultz responded that it is not true that nobody wanted this plan. The commission approved the plan by a majority. Lots of citizens called, voted, and wanted us to continue. In response to the second question, he stated that PUHSD actually suggested this plan was a viable option.

Commissioner Kaprosy stated that this will be the largest district in the state and that academic turbulence will occur here. This plan is going to a vote and the future of these districts is in your hands. He also stated that lots of thought went into these questions.

Commissioner Thomas stated that each individual district must have a majority of votes for the entire plan to pass.

- B. Sarah Spear, a parent in the Madison School District, asked the following question:  
Who is funding the publicity campaign and paid consultant?

Chairman Shultz responded that there is some free and earned publicity such as when the Arizona Republic asked him to write an article about redistricting. They did a Q and A online. He stated that there is a campaign forming and will become public in the near future. The commissioners do not get paid. The legal work was done by Ken Behringer at Legislative Council. The Arizona Department of Education has kept the website up. Arizona State University produced the video. In the near future people from the business community will want to start a campaign. This has all been pro bono. But when the campaign starts, there will be campaign contributions. Chairman Shultz stated that he will start collecting campaign contributions from APS shareholders, not customers. The Arizona School Boards Association is putting out factual documents. There are other forums that have occurred by AEA and PTA. All

this information will be public record on file at the Secretary of State's office. Open-enrollment in Arizona is alive and well. Chairman Shultz further stated that Rhonda Bannard is a consultant to a number of organizations in town and has been helping out. Gretchen Kitchell is an employee of mine. It seems to me that here we are on off-hour times. We don't get paid extra for doing civic activities—it is expected.

C. Kelly Sue Butler asked the following question:

How will districts pay for redistricting without additional funding?

Commissioner Thomas stated that redistricting will result in some increased and some decreased costs. The law provided for transition costs. There was a law on the books for 20 years giving incentives for unification, but no districts used it, so it was taken out. The school boards will have to figure out how to fund their new district and move money around. There is some latitude with the funding; most districts just said we don't know how to do this.

Chairman Shultz gave an example of a consultant that did an analysis of teacher salary and school finance which showed how a school district would be able to fund their district from their current finances.

Commissioner Kaprosy stated that it comes down to elected governing boards and the best interests of school districts. Some of these costs will be one-time costs; we need to look at the long-term benefits of redistricting.

D. Kate McDonald asked the following questions:

What are the long-term effects on achievement?

What other districts in the country have done this?

Chairman Shultz stated that we are one of the last states to unify school districts. The PUHSD would be one of the smallest districts in the nation. Compare these districts to Peoria and Mesa and talk about the money they put into the classroom. Regarding the long-term effects on achievement, I am not aware if we have any specific data to present. I believe by putting more money into the classroom it will increase student achievement.

Commissioner Thomas stated that there were five factors presented to the commission. They are as follows: 1) School district size has no measurable effect on student achievement; 2) As district size increases student achievement increases; 3) As district size decreases student achievement decreases; 4) Low SES students perform better in smaller districts; and, 5) High SES students perform better in larger districts.

Chairman Shultz stated that he would like to do the analysis to find out if there is a statistical correlation to student achievement and unification.

Commissioner Vicki Anderson stated that there is something wrong with education in Arizona and it needs help. Perhaps unification will help students achieve the same grade-level background and curriculum.

E. Patricia AKuhn asked the following question:

How will individual district bonds and debts impact new districts that unify?

Chairman Shultz stated that the debt of an individual district will stay with those who incurred it, but that any new debts will become a responsibility of the new district.

Commissioner Harding stated that in Maricopa County bonding indebtedness will be spread out between the new district. However, if a district is subdivided, the debt will stay within the district.

Commissioner Kaprosy stated that the School Facilities Board will take on the costs of school construction.

F. Hope Olguin stated that the video had the election date wrong and that it is November 4<sup>th</sup>, not the 6<sup>th</sup>.

G. Kendra Tolleeson asked the following question:

How do we know that any savings will actually go to classroom? Is that in the statute?

How do we know that the legislature won't take the funding?

Chairman Shultz stated that it is the responsibility of the new school board to decide how to allocated the district's funds.

Commissioner Schoaf stated that unification will potentially bring out waste dollars. The foverning boards are the ones who decide where the dollars are spent. Commissioner Schoaf encouraged the public to look at the Auditor General's report. He stated that Kyrene does a tremendous job of getting money into the classroom and stated it can be done better than we are doing today.

Commissioner Kaprosy stated there have been enormous changes in school funding in even the last ten years. He discussed the multiple factors involved in school finance which include K-3, group B weights, prop 301, and school faciliities. Utility costs need to be addressed.

Commissioner Thomas stated that statute protects teachers' first year of pay. However, things not protected are food service, custodial services, and class size.

H. Paul Lowes asked the following question:

Where are the details? What does the new school board do?

Chairman Shultz stated the law says it is up to the school boards to figure out the details. It is necessary to have confidence in the local school boards and have some faith.

I. Stanley B. Plum asked the following question:

Is redistricting a cost-savings measure?

Chairman Shultz stated that redistricting will allow the new school board to unify or reduce administrative costs, and re-allocate those costs. This, of course, is if the school board diligently allows re-allocation of these costs

Commissioner Kaprosy stated that if you do not have faith that the governing board will re-allocate these costs, then vote no. If you think there will be some improvements, then vote yes. It does require some faith and looking at the system as a whole.

Commissioner Thomas stated our plan (the SDRC) was to implement change (through redistricting). But the actual plan comes from the local school board with the money they already had. In Mesa, 90% of the funding goes to salary and benefits and the specifics are left to local control.

J. Sandra Nearing

Will redistricting ensure that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are ready for reading and writing requirements?

Commissioner Shultz stated it is up to the school boards to make sure that happens.

K. Tee Lambert stated the following:

He appreciates the work the commission's done. It has refocused the view on education. The statute says salary can't be reduced in the first year. Elementary schools have problems of student achievement. What about consolidating charter schools?

L. Mary

Are my taxes going to pay for districts in receivership that overexpended their budgets if unification occurs?

M. Mary Konczal stated the following:

Economies of scale achieved at 5000 students

Chairman Shultz responded that the larger unified districts put more money into classroom at a greater percentage.

## 5. Adjournment

Chairman Shultz thanked the audience for attending and stated there will be other upcoming forums around the state.